

Lessons from past union battles point road forward

BY TERRY EVANS

Miners forced on strike for over a year at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama, and other workers across North America, are standing up to the employers’ assault on our wages, and fighting for schedules that allow for a family life and safe work conditions. With attacks on workers mounting across industries, opinion polls show support for unions is at a 57-year high, underscoring the importance of workers using our unions to defend ourselves and other working people.

Lessons from labor battles in the 1930s that forged unions as powerful tools show what workers are capable of accomplishing to advance our own class interests.

The most far-reaching was the organizing drive and battle for better wages and conditions waged by Teamster union militants in Minneapolis, and in the broader Midwest over-the-road campaign that grew out

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Defend Ukraine independence! Get Moscow’s troops out now!

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Moscow’s invading forces captured Lysychansk, the last city in Luhansk province held by Ukrainian forces, July 3, after weeks of grinding but costly battles. The Russian forces used their wide edge in artillery and missiles to carry out systematic and devastating shelling that leveled Lysychansk and its twin city Severodonetsk, to drive back the tenacious Ukrainian resistance.

Russian President Vladimir Putin

Solidarity with workers in Ukraine, Russia! End US sanctions on Russia!

immediately ordered Moscow’s depleted forces to advance into adjoining Donetsk province, the last part of Ukraine’s Donbas region under Kyiv’s control. “Artillery is already hitting the city,” Sloviansk Mayor Vadym Lyakh told Ukrainian TV July 5. He urged civilians there to evacuate.

Kyiv’s forces control a good part of

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Warrior Met miners’ rally marks 15 months on strike

Build solidarity in fight against assault on UMWA



UMWA

June 29 UMWA rally of over 400 in Brookwood, Alabama. Despite record profits, Warrior Met mine bosses refuse to reverse wage, benefit cuts, and attack right of the union to picket.

BY MARKLYN WILSON

BROOKWOOD, Ala. — Striking miners at Warrior Met Coal and their family members and supporters gathered at a rally of 400 outside United Mine Workers of America Local 2397’s union hall here June 29, marking 15 months on strike.

In 2016 Warrior Met Coal took over Jim Walter Resources, which had declared bankruptcy the year before. Threatening to shut the mines down if the union didn’t accept concessions, bosses pushed through a \$6-an-hour pay cut along with slashes in health care coverage, overtime pay, and other work conditions. The company told miners that it would reverse those cuts when Warrior Met returned to profitability.

Court ruling spurs debate on how to defend the rights of workers, women

BY VIVIAN SAHNER

The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision overturning Roe v. Wade has reopened a much-needed debate over the road forward to advance the fight for women’s equality. It’s well worth discussing why that ruling was made in 1973, and its lessons for today’s fight by working people to defend ourselves and our families from the impact of the capitalist crisis, and for the fight for women’s emancipation.

The 1960s and ’70s saw important developments that changed the face of U.S. politics forever. Key was the mighty Black-led working-class movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation.

That disciplined and determined

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Going into 2021, it was raking in its best-ever profits. When the bosses refused to honor their earlier promise to restore wages and benefits, union members voted to reject the company’s contract proposal by 95%. They have been on strike ever since.

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CN Rail signal workers strike ends, dispute goes to arbitration

BY FÉLIX VINCENT ARDEA

MONTREAL — After a lively two-week strike, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers officials decided July 5 to send the fight by some 750 Canadian National Railway signal and communications workers for higher wages and important changes in scheduling to binding arbitration. The workers had gone on strike across the country June 18.

Robert Reilly, executive vice presi-

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Militant/Sara Lobman

SWP U.S. Senate candidate Osborne Hart, right, talks with James Shabazz in Philadelphia June 24 at start of campaign to get 2,000 signatures to place Chris Hoeppepner on ballot for Congress.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Socialist Workers Party members are discussing the roots of the capitalist crises working people face today and what we can do together to defend ourselves. As they present the party’s program widely among workers and farmers they’re getting a good response, including from rail workers confronting bosses’ attacks on wages and conditions.

The article “Rail workers resist gov’t, boss attacks on safety, pay” in last

week’s issue of the *Militant* and the paper’s report on the strike of 40,000 rail workers in the United Kingdom got the attention of rail workers in Oakland, California, July 4.

Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor of California, reports that Amtrak rail mechanics he spoke with at an afternoon shift change were drawn to the front-page photo showing a freight train derailment in

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Prison authorities refuse to give inmates mail, only digital scans

BY SETH GALINSKY

More and more prison systems across the country are no longer delivering mail from the post office to workers behind bars. On the pretext of slowing the flow of drugs and other contraband to

inmates, they are requiring that letters, cards, drawings or photos from friends and family be sent to a special facility to be scanned, and then make available only a digital copy to the prisoner.

Some prison systems have turned this policy into a moneymaking operation, charging prisoners for printouts or even just for electronic access to the scans.

The *Militant* first became aware of the policies from subscribers in Florida prisons, who brought it to our attention after being introduced there in February.

“As a family man, it’s real important for me to keep some original letters, photos, cards, and drawings,” Florida prisoner Luis Rosario wrote in March. “If I wish to keep a copy of a letter or photo, I will have to pay for a printout,” he notes. “This is not a security issue, just a reactionary campaign meant to more firmly dominate us.”

The Florida Department of Corrections set the price of a print at 25 cents a page for black-and-white copies and \$1 per page for color. For prisoners with little access to funds, this can be an insurmountable obstacle.

For digital copies accessed through a kiosk or tablet, Florida prisoners are allowed to keep a maximum of 200 letters, inmates say. Each time a new one is added, the oldest one is deleted.

Prisoners are no longer allowed to receive stamps and writing paper from friends and relatives. Instead, they have to purchase those supplies at inflated prices from the commissary. Another prisoner wrote that this “limits our access to the outside world.”

Pennsylvania’s Department of Corrections became one of the first prison

Dutch farmers protest gov’t moves to cut their herds



Vincent Jannink/EPA

Thousands of farmers driving their tractors demonstrated June 22 in central Netherlands protesting government plans to compel them to reduce their livestock herds by 30%, forcing the scaling back or closing of a number of farms. Traffic came to a standstill for miles around the town of Stroe, east of Amsterdam, during the action.

The capitalist rulers in the Netherlands — as in many other countries — are determined to advance “climate change” schemes regardless of their impact on working people.

“You can’t just close farms that are hundreds of years old. You just can’t,” Jan Poorter, 74, told Agence France-Presse. Protesters carried signs saying, “The future of farmers is being destroyed” and “No farmers, no food.”

As tractors parked outside the Dutch parliament building in The Hague June 28, Prime Minister Mark Rutte dismissed the protest. “The honest message,” he told the press, “is that not all farmers can continue their business.”

Netherlands is an important agricultural exporter, especially to other countries in Europe. The Dutch government has mandated that emission of pollutants, predominantly nitrogen oxide and ammonia, be cut by up to 70% in many areas to comply with EU greenhouse gas regulations.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

systems to ban mail and replace it with scans, in 2018. At the end of 2021 the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and the New Mexico Corrections Department both followed suit. Federal prison authorities tested a similar pilot program for at least a year.

Smart Communications, the private firm that scans the letters for Pennsylvania inmates, reports that it is hoping to expand “services” to more of the over 100 state and local prison systems it works with in over 20 states. And, the company boasts, scanning the correspondence “opens a whole new field of intelligence” for prison authorities.

Many prisoners say the digital copies they receive are low quality, especially of photos, or have sections that have been scanned incorrectly or are cut off.

Prisoners at Wisconsin’s Fox Lake Correctional Institution complain of long delays and missing pages after a pilot mail policy began there. But once the mail is scanned, it’s shredded, “with no recourse for us to get the mistakes fixed,” inmate Joshua Wade told the *Wisconsin State Journal*. “We’re not asking them not to photocopy our mail. We’re just asking for some type of way to get things fixed when they mess up.”

“Eliminating physical mail is needlessly cruel,” some 40 human rights, prisoner rights, unionists, religious groups and others wrote in a letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland in July 2021. “Letters from family members, drawings from children, and greeting cards from loved ones help maintain family and community connections.”

THE MILITANT

Speak out against gov’t attacks on political rights

The Democratic Party’s use of a hand-picked partisan panel to attack political opponents for the Jan. 6, 2021, events threatens political rights working people have fought for and have a stake in safeguarding. The ‘Militant’ explains the stakes involved.



Militant/Glen Campbell

Cleveland picket, 1976, supporting SWP lawsuit against use of FBI informers and break-ins.

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Lessons from past union battles

Continued from front page

of it. They united drivers and other workers, organized the unemployed, owner-operators, farmers and women into an effective fighting force. These battles, described in Farrell Dobbs' four-volume Teamster books, are available from distributors listed on page 8.

Teamster union and Socialist Workers Party leaders, like Farrell Dobbs, fought against moves by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration and Washington's political police — the FBI — to frame up unionists organizing opposition to Washington's drive to get into the second imperialist world war.

They set an example of uncompromising working-class struggle that was emulated in the sit-down strikes that marked the rise of the United Auto Workers and Congress of Industrial Organizations in the mid-1930s. Dauntless and disciplined, workers battled not only the bosses, but the government, cops, court injunctions and the National Guard. Millions were drawn to the unions, as workers began to sense their own class power, including, for the first time, growing numbers of Black workers.

In the decades since, most union officials have settled into cozy relations with the bosses and government regulators, focusing on dues-collecting operations, not advancing the class struggle. Instead of helping workers mobilize to fight and win allies to their side, they've increasingly subordinated workers' interests to getting so-called friends of labor in the Democratic Party elected. As labor's ranks are forced to find ways to protect ourselves, how we use our unions to fight effectively for what we need is sharply posed.

All signs point to a global slowdown in production and trade, following decades in which capitalist profit rates have tended to decline. A survey issued July 1 of employers worldwide says that factory production is dropping, and new orders are falling at their fastest rate since May 2020. Copper prices, used as a gauge of economic growth because a variety of goods contain this metal, have dropped to their lowest level in 18 months.

Fear of a recession roiling wealthy capitalist investors was reflected in a sharp plunge in stock prices on the S&P 500 in the first half of 2022, the steepest drop since 1970.

The slowdown in the capitalist economy comes on top of skyrocketing inflation. Workers confront the highest price hikes in 40 years. Rents are up an average of 15% over last year, and some 13.7 million people were behind on rent or mortgage payments in early June. Evictions are increasing. Gas prices, food costs, child care and other necessities continue to rise.

Capitalist politicians are utterly indifferent to what workers face. Their only advice is "look out for number one," which is the morality of dog-eat-dog capitalism.

President Joseph Biden told the press June 30 that gas prices workers face *should* stay high "for as long as it takes," blaming Moscow's war in Ukraine. Hours later one of his advisers, Brian Deese, said, "This is about the future of the liberal world order."

That "liberal world order" was put together to ensure U.S. rulers could protect their class interests against rival capitalist powers and working people everywhere. That's been true under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Neither party offers any alternative for working people other than a future of economic crises and preparations for more wars abroad.

A fighting program for our unions

Workers have no reason to think there is anything the Democratic or Republican parties can or will do to stop bosses' attacks on our working and living standards. But we do have our own organizations, the unions, that we can use to join together to fight for our own class interests.

Right now pay raises workers win are being rapidly wiped out by inflation. Cost-of-living clauses are needed in every union contract *now*. Whenever and wherever prices rise, our wages should go up automatically to match, so we aren't left waiting years for negotiations over a new contract to seek relief, but are protected immediately.

Many union contracts included such clauses from past battles, but they've been allowed to lapse. We can fight for similar strong measures for all workers, and in Social Security and other government programs. This year workers on Social Security

SWP backs rail union fights, seeks ballot in Philadelphia

Continued from front page

Texas and pointing to an Amtrak derailment in Missouri that killed four people and injured 150.

"Safe railroad operations have to be fought for, especially by our unions," Britton said to one worker who pulled out a \$5 bill for a copy of the paper and told Britton to keep the change.

Britton and party member Jeff Powers also visited the BNSF rail yard in the Port of Oakland. An engineer who got a *Militant* subscription from Powers in the spring said he found the paper "too militant" and declined to renew. But he did want to talk about how working conditions are getting worse and worse, as the rail bosses get richer and richer. Powers said he and Britton would be back for more discussion. All told, 10 rail workers got copies of the socialist newsweekly.

At Penn Station in New York, party members sold five copies of the *Militant* and a subscription on July 3. "An Amtrak station maintenance worker took a look at the *Militant* and readily agreed that the companies don't care about the lives of rail workers, just their profits. He got the subscription and bought two copies of the paper to give to other workers he knows," reports SWP member Seth Galinsky.

One worker took a flyer for the campaign of Sara Lobman, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate. He said he would post it on the bulletin board in the break room. A member of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ, who works maintaining the station,



Minnesota Historical Society

Striking Teamsters in Minneapolis gather before defeating cops and bosses' thugs at "Battle of Deputies Run," May 21-22, 1934. With a class-struggle leadership, workers learned to wield union power. Lessons from these battles set example for workers facing boss attacks today.

got a cost-of-living "adjustment," but it was eliminated by the real rate of inflation and higher costs for Medicare coverage.

Our unions need to lead a fight for workers control of production, to defend ourselves from the injuries and deaths caused by speedup and "suicide" schedules.

Fighting for such measures and the power to enforce them will mean making our unions stronger. Bosses and the government do everything they can to mask the real scale of inflation and company profits. Workers need price committees made up of trade unionists, farmers, housewives and other consumers to monitor store prices and force open the bosses' books, expose their secret deals and methods of price gouging, and the ways they profit by

cutting corners on workers' conditions and product safety.

Layoffs have already begun at tech companies. They have frozen hiring and thrown some 30,000 workers out of jobs in the past two months. To prevent the working class from getting torn apart as production slows and competition for jobs mounts, the unions need to fight for 30 hours work at 40 hours pay, to spread the available work around, to defend our wages and ensure no worker is thrown onto the streets.

As working people fight along these lines, we will strengthen our self-confidence and class consciousness. It will become increasingly clear workers and our unions need to break from the two capitalist parties and organize our own party, a labor party, and fight to take political power into our own hands.

told campaigners they should come back to talk with more rail workers.

Pennsylvania ballot drive

Final preparations are being set for the stepped-up three-week effort to place Chris Hoeppe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from Pennsylvania, on the ballot. The goal is to collect 2,000 signatures, twice as many as required, in the Philadelphia area July 9-31 as part of introducing working people to the party's program. A July 9 Militant Labor Forum with John Studer, the party's national campaign director, will launch the three-week effort.

This will be the first time in decades the SWP will have ballot status for federal office in Pennsylvania. The campaigning effort is already off to a good start with 332 signatures collected, and 15 subscriptions and 18 books sold.

The party in Pennsylvania is also running Candace Wagner for governor and Osborne Hart for U.S. Senate.

'Militant' renewal drive

Party members and supporters are also involved in a five-week international effort June 25-Aug. 2 to win 300 of those who subscribed to the *Militant* this spring to become long-term readers of the paper. The drive includes selling 300 books on lessons of working-class and revolutionary struggles to renewing subscribers.

"I'm renewing my subscription because the media has other interests," Canadian National rail conductor Alexandre Jacob told Communist League

member Katy LeRougetel after attending a June 29 barbecue and rally backing unionists on strike at Rolls-Royce in Montreal. "They don't talk about workers, and it's important to get out this kind of news."

"I appreciate the coverage you shine on Cuba," wrote a prisoner in California along with his renewal. "Reading the *Militant* has educated me so much on socialism."

So far 13 renewals have been mailed in from readers behind bars. Over the last two years the number of prisoners who have subscribed has reached 194, the highest number in more than a decade, as more inmates tell fellow prisoners about the paper.

Among workers who signed up for a renewal in Texas was Harmon Dent, a retired member of the United Steelworkers union in Beaumont who had worked at the ExxonMobil oil refinery.

He told the *Militant* that he liked the breadth of the paper's coverage of labor struggles. "The reporting on the Canadian truckers and the U.S. truckers convoy was important for all workers to know about," he said. "You can still read the paper at the Steelworkers' hall in Beaumont."

Dent helped win support for the Steelworkers locked out by refinery bosses for 10 months beginning in May 2021 for refusing to accept a union-gutting contract. He purchased *Labor, Nature, and the Evolution of Humanity*.

To join the *Militant* renewal campaign and the effort to get the SWP on the ballot in Pennsylvania, contact the nearest campaign office listed on page 8.

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Locked-out Rolls-Royce workers in Montreal rally, win solidarity

BY PHILIPPE TESSIER

MONTREAL — A festive yet determined barbecue was held here June 29 to show solidarity with 530 engine repair workers locked out by Rolls-Royce bosses and with 300 striking bakery workers at Bridor on the south shore. Both are organized by the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN).

On June 21 Rolls-Royce bosses announced they had fired Frédéric Labelle, president of the Montreal local.

That same day over 11,000 Unite union members at Rolls-Royce in the United Kingdom rejected a revised 4% wage increase and 2,000 pound (\$2,420) one-time bonus contract offer by the bosses. The employers claimed the bonus would offset inflation. “The revised offer still falls a long way short of the cost-of-living crisis claim submitted by our members and their expectations,” said the union. Flags of Unite could be seen on workers’ hand-made signs in Montreal.

“This attempt to fire me is a frame-up,” Labelle told hundreds of unionists from Rolls-Royce, Bridor, and elsewhere at the barbecue and rally near the company gates. “They will not be able to break us. We can feel here that an injury to one is an injury to all.”

This new attack against the union comes after four months on the picket lines. “Rolls-Royce’s firing our union president is part of their attempts to demoralize us and break our strike,” Tom Larin, an inspector in the plant, told the *Militant*. “It won’t work. It makes us more determined to fight than ever. The solidarity from other unions helps a lot.”

The workers were locked out March 15 as they were taking a strike vote, which passed by 94%. The contract expired in March 2020.

The company is trying to get rid of the defined benefit pension plan that covers most workers in the plant.

Workers hired after 2013 are under a defined contribution plan, which is what the company wants to impose on all workers. The union demands the defined benefit plan.

“Our fight for pensions is a fight for all aerospace workers, for all workers in Quebec and for all Rolls-Royce workers around the world,” Labelle told the rally. “We are facing the same attacks as they do on the other side of the planet.”

A delegation came from CSN locals in the Quebec City region, including construction workers, bus drivers and health care workers. They brought financial contributions to both Rolls-Royce and Bridor fighters.

“In the plant before we went out we did not have this solidarity. After over three months, I’m proud to see we are all here,” said Eric Mailloux, a fitter for 22 years.

A spirited delegation from the strikers at Bridor was hailed by all speakers. “It’s our 11th week on strike. We go from one union to another to make us stronger,” Claude Carriere, an operator-fitter there



Confederation of National Trade Unions
Frédéric Labelle, president of Montreal local of CSN workers locked out by Rolls-Royce, speaks to unionists outside Montreal courthouse June 22, the day after bosses fired him.

for 21 years, told the *Militant*.

In both battles workers are demanding higher wages to offset skyrocketing prices. Canada’s official inflation rate for May was 7.7%. Bridor bosses offered 2.5% a year and Rolls-Royce 17% over seven years.

“The firing of Labelle is an attack on the union and on workers’ rights,” Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate in the provincial elections and a

worker at another Bridor plant in Montreal and member of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union, told workers at the barbecue. “I will use my campaign to urge working people and their unions to support this fight.”

The CSN has launched a campaign to raise funds for the Rolls-Royce unionists. Contribute at www.csn.qc.ca/actualites/en-lutte-pour-lequite-et-la-justice.

CN signal workers strike ends, dispute goes to arbitration

Continued from front page

supendent and chief operating officer at CN, said in a letter sent to all the strikers that the union has rejected an offer of “10 percent improvement to wages over three years.” But the IBEW explained this is a gross misrepresentation of the company’s real offer, which is an 8% increase, with a 2% one-time signing bonus. That’s just 2.7% a year, while the consumer price index in Canada rose 7.7% in May compared to the same month last year. The real rate of inflation — especially of necessities like food and gasoline — is much higher than that.

Strikers in Montreal had been picketing the different yards, but aren’t trying

to shut them down. They received support from conductors and engineers going into work, who often stopped to talk, learn more about the strikers’ demands and offer solidarity.

The company sought to keep signal operations running by using management personnel and contractors as scabs in an effort to break the strike. “This should concern everyone,” IBEW International Vice President Russ Shewchuk said, “as it opens the door for unqualified people operating and maintaining our rail safety across Canada.”

In addition to the wages question, the company wants to force those assigned on “work gangs” to take assignments

anywhere in a territory covering half the country. This could take them up to a day’s travel to get there and another day to return. “It’s not a good situation to be sent away wherever the company wants, whenever they want,” said Stephane, who’s worked at CN for 30 years. “It’s our families that suffer in this.” Stephane didn’t want his last name published for fear of reprisals.

“I think it’s important to show solidarity even if we don’t work in the same economic sector,” Aurelie Mcbrearty, a unionized nurse, told the *Militant* when she joined the picket line.

The signal workers were slated to return to their jobs July 6.

Félix Vincent Ardea is a train conductor at Canadian National and member of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Division 89.

Protests mark 5th anniversary of Grenfell Tower fire

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — Commemorations and protests across this city marked the fifth anniversary of the deadly Grenfell Tower fire of June 14, 2017. Seventy-two people were killed in that blaze and 70 others injured, in a building wrapped in highly flammable cladding. Five years later, hundreds of thousands continue to live in similarly dangerous buildings.

Grenfell Towers had broken fire alarms and no sprinkler system. Residents’ complaints were ignored for years by authorities, who didn’t want to take on the expense of repairs.

Hundreds joined a commemorative silent march led by Grenfell United, the survivors and relatives organization.

Protesters carried signs highlighting a mountain of evidence about the culpability of successive governments and those involved in the management and refurbishment of the apartment block. They called for charges to be brought against those responsible. Crowds, including members of the Fire Brigade Union, lined the route.

“As many as 641,000 residents are living in 345,000 properties that remain at risk from a potentially fatal fire,” reported the *Times* June 12.

Here in London, 1,100 buildings have fire-safety defects so severe they need round-the-clock patrols, known as “waking watches,” according to City Hall.

New building safety measures adopted last Dec. 1 include a ban on the ACM cladding used at Grenfell, but only for future developments, not existing properties. Last year the government announced a nonlegally binding “requirement” that sprinklers be included in future construction of buildings over 11 meters (36 feet) high.

In May the government rejected a proposal from the public inquiry into the fire that building owners be mandated to outline evacuation plans for residents. Current government “stay put” policy

asks residents at most buildings to wait inside their apartments for rescue services whenever there is a fire.

“We are enraged at the government, whose sole focus continues to be profit and not public safety,” said Grenfell United in a press statement in response to the decision.

The inquiry, announced by then Prime Minister Theresa May, has dragged on for years. Despite receiving evidence alleging corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, fraud and health and safety violations, the police have said that no charges will be made until the inquiry is over.

“We know who the guilty people are,” Marlene Anderson, whose father, Ray “Moses” Bernard, died in the fire, told the *Telegraph*. “Yet they are still walking around free.”

“Workers don’t need the fraud of long inquiries and ‘better’ regulations or ‘feel your pain’ visits by party leaders and the Royals,” said a statement issued by the Communist League in 2017, just days after the fire.

“What’s needed is workers control over construction and maintenance,” CL leader Jonathan Silberman said, June 14. “Housing safety should be placed in the hands of trade unions and residents.”

—**MILITANT
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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Quarry workers in Illinois strike against boss attacks

McCOOK, Ill. — Some 300 members of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 went on strike June 7 against three Chicago-area quarry companies — Lehigh Hanson, Vulcan Materials and Lafarge Holcim — over unfair labor practices. The local has 23,000 members in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa.

The companies produce aggregate materials, including sand, gravel and crushed stone that are essential to the production of asphalt, concrete and other construction materials, as well as mine rock for road construction.

“We are gaining support from other unions. The Teamsters refuse to cross our picket lines,” Ed Maher, communications director for the local, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent. “Paving companies are laying off workers and shutting down due to lack of materials. Teamster members at the paving companies have said they support the strike.

“The companies have unilaterally changed rules and conditions, including how to get time off for COVID,” he said. “And they threatened to fire any worker who went on strike.”

The Chicago Area Aggregate Producers Association is negotiating on behalf of the companies. The last strike here was in 1967.

All told, picket lines are up at approximately 35 quarries, mines and other facilities.

Messages of support should be sent to emaher@local150.org or mailed to IUOE Local 150, 6200 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525

— Dan Fein

United Auto Workers on strike in Iowa, Wisconsin win solidarity

STURTEVANT, Wis. — “I’m confident that the members of this local will continue to strike as long as the company keeps making ridiculous offers,” Yasin Mahdi, president of United Auto Workers Local 180, told the *Militant* June 17. “We’re going to be out there 24/7 until we get the decent

agreement we deserve.”

The 600 members of Local 180, along with 430 members of UAW Local 807 in Burlington, Iowa, went on strike against heavy equipment manufacturer Case New Holland May 2.

“Morale is high on the picket line,” Mahdi said. “We’ve been getting a lot of support from the community.”

“We’ve also received sizable contributions from a number of unions — UAW Local 94 at John Deere in Dubuque, Iowa; UAW Local 72 at Chrysler in Kenosha; and the teachers’ union, to name a few.”

“The biggest issue for me is getting a pay increase. Instead, the company wants to take away what little they’re offering in wages by increasing what we have to pay for medical care,” said Marisela Neave on the picket line. A 37-year-old CNC machinist with 20 years experience, she had worked at CNH for three months before the strike began.

“I’m in a lucky position compared to some of the others on strike. My husband is a computer tech, and our two kids are on their own, so being out for this long is not as hard on us,” she said. “But with inflation running the way it is now, we’ll be living paycheck to paycheck with both of our incomes even if we win a decent contract.”

“Aside from pay, the other thing that most people I work with are concerned about is the change they want to make in our health insurance, which would have us paying increased premiums and co-pays,” said Robert D’Acquisto, a customer quality auditor with 10 years’ experience at CNH. “And the ridiculous schedules they want us to work. Overtime should be voluntary, not mandatory.”

“The company’s acting like they want to go nonunion, like some of their other plants,” he added. “We’re not going to roll over and let that happen.”

Contributions, messages of support and checks can be dropped off or mailed to the Local 180 union hall, at 3323 Kearney Ave., Mt. Pleasant, WI 53403. Messages can also be sent to president@uawlocal180.com.



Militant/Dan Fein

Members of International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, on picket line June 14, struck after Chicago-area quarry bosses imposed changes to work rules and conditions.

And to Local 807 at 9313 Koestner St., Burlington, IA 52601. Messages can also be sent to uawlocal807@qwestoffice.net.

— John Hawkins

Chicago-area drivers fight for safety at Breakthru Beverage

CICERO, Ill. — More than 100 delivery drivers for alcohol wholesaler Breakthru Beverage, members of Teamsters Local 710, walked out June 13. The central issues were “safety on the job, increasing load sizes, the inability of members to use their earned personal time, and retirement benefits,” the union says. On July 1 the union announced workers had ratified a new contract.

“They’re loading more onto the trucks and pushing us to stay out longer,” shop steward Brian Hill told the *Militant* on the picket line June 28. “We’ve been working a lot of 12- to 14-hour days. If they’d hire more guys and the load size went down, we could enjoy life outside of Breakthru Beverage.”

Workers are supposed to have a number of personal days they can take off, but “they say they don’t have the people and so we can’t use them,” Hill explained.

“This is a physical job, it wears and tears on your body, but they don’t appreciate us,” Jay Davis told the *Militant*. “I’d also like a raise that keeps up with inflation.” Davis was hired full time two years ago after working three years as a temporary driver. It’s his first time in a union, and on strike.

Several strikers said they also worry about safety. “We’ve had four drivers in the last year robbed, two at gunpoint,” shop steward Jimmy Drews told the *Chicago Tribune*. “Even afterwards, they did not have one meeting or make one move to do anything to secure our workplace environment.”

The drivers’ contract expired in March, but they continued working under an extension. They overwhelmingly rejected a tentative agreement April 29, and carried out the three-week strike after negotiations broke down.

— Naomi Craine

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



July 28, 1997

CORDOBA, Argentina — Since September, the Fiat plant in this city has been the scene of one of the most important labor battles in Argentina in a number of years. The workers are fighting for recognition of their union and resisting the company’s attempt to force major concessions in wages, benefits and working conditions.

Cordoba is the center of the auto and aerospace industry of this South American country. The government of Carlos Menem is pushing to pass a sweeping “labor flexibilization” bill.

The struggle at Fiat reflects moods developing among other industrial workers. “Our fight is part of the struggle against the labor flexibilization bill,” said Carlos Gallo, the main leader of the union activists. “The bosses have already begun to implement it at Renault and Volkswagen, and it will be used against the whole labor movement.”



July 21, 1972

The following expresses the views of Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley, presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the Socialist Workers Party.

From 1965 to 1972 prices rose by more than 30%, according to the Department of Labor. The following points constitute the program of the SWP for combating rising prices.

1) Cost-of-living, or escalator, clauses in all union contracts so that wages will rise to whatever degree prices rise. The clause should also be applied to Social Security payments, welfare payments, and the minimum wage to alleviate the effect of inflation on those with fixed incomes.

2) Immediate, unconditional withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

3) Roll back all rents to a maximum of 10% of family income.

4) Consumer committees should be elected in each neighborhood to inspect price increases in supermarkets.



July 21, 1947

Eight Negro inmates of a Georgia state prison camp were blasted to death on July 11 in a cold-blooded massacre by race-hating prison guards led by a drink-inflamed warden. Five other prisoners in the all-Negro hell-camp were seriously wounded.

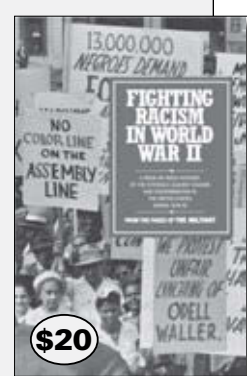
The details of the mass lynching were described by surviving prisoners. William Bell, one of the five wounded, testified that Warden H. G. Worthy was enraged and drunk. Bell, whom guards call the “leader” of the prisoners, said that Worthy called out to him: “Come out, Pee Wee, I want to kill you.” When Bell didn’t move, Worthy shot him in the leg at the same time shouting, “Let ’em have it!”

Fear-stricken by the hail of bullets and shot-gun pellets, the 27 men ran for whatever cover they could find. Thirteen sprawled in their blood on the ground. Five died immediately, three others within three days.

Fighting Racism in World War II

A week-by-week account from 1939 to 1945 of efforts

to advance the Black rights struggle in face of patriotic appeals to postpone resistance to lynch-mob terror and racist discrimination until after U.S. “victory” in World War II.



February 1965: The Final Speeches by Malcolm X

Speeches from the last three weeks of the life of this outstanding leader of the oppressed Black nationality and of the working class in the U.S.



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Defend Ukraine independence!

Continued from front page

Donetsk, including three major cities, Sloviansk, Bakhmut and Kramatorsk, the headquarters of Ukrainian military forces in the east.

Moscow continues to punish Ukrainian working people for their resistance, ruthlessly bombing civilian areas in major cities across the country, like Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa.

A July 1 missile attack struck near Odesa, the main port in southern Ukraine, killing at least 21 people. The attack came a day after Russian forces were forced to abandon Snake Island. The strategic island had been an important part of Moscow's control over the Black Sea and its blockade against Ukrainian grain exports. Whether Ukraine's victory taking the island back will affect the blockade remains to be seen.

Ukraine supplies almost a 10th of the world's wheat, 15% of its corn and 44% of global sunflower oil exports.

Ukraine forces advance on Kherson

"Ukrainians are fighting courageously, often arms in hand, to defend Ukraine's national sovereignty and independence," says a statement issued in March by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on behalf of the party's National Committee. "The Socialist Workers Party hails their resistance and calls for the defeat of Putin's invading forces." The party and others continue to distribute the statement widely, along with the *Militant's* weekly coverage.



Alexei Gorinov, an opposition elected deputy in Moscow, on trial for "discrediting" the Russian military, holds a sign June 21 saying, "I'm against the war."

Mass protests 'won something for all Ecuadorians'

BY SETH GALINSKY

Indigenous groups in Ecuador announced June 30 gains made after two-and-a-half weeks of daily protests and highway blockades, fighting for measures to protect workers and farmers from the ravages of inflation and other effects of today's capitalist economic and social crisis.

"We didn't win 100%, but we won something for all Ecuadorians," Leonidas Iza Salazar, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie), told a crowd of thousands in Quito, calling off further protests for now. Conaie

leaders said they're ready to resume their resistance if the government reneges on the agreements.

Iza noted that they had been demanding a 40-cent a gallon cut in diesel prices, which have nearly doubled over the last two years. Ecuador President Guillermo Lasso had at first offered a 10-cent cut, but then agreed to 15 cents, to \$1.75 a gallon.

The government agreed to discuss additional fuel subsidies for hard-hit sections of the population, including small farmers and fishermen. It also cut the price of cooking oil by 20% and agreed to lower the prices of other ba-

Putin expands repression at home

Since the invasion of Ukraine, Putin has systematically ratcheted up repression and militarization at home. When his invasion was met by far-reaching protests across Russia, he retaliated with a brutal crackdown. At least 15,000 have been arrested since and thousands more harassed and threatened.

The regime recently escalated this in a flurry of high-profile detentions by the secret police. Not only outspoken opponents of Moscow's war but also those open to freer exchange of ideas in academic institutions were among those targeted.

Vladimir Mau, a university rector just reelected to the board of Gazprom, which controls Russia's gas production and pipelines, has been arrested for "fraud." His Kremlin links and support for Putin's "necessary decision" to invade Ukraine were not enough to protect him from becoming a target on suspicion of being a "systemic liberal."

Ivan Fedotov, the star goalie for Russia's silver medal ice hockey team at the February Beijing Olympics, was grabbed and whisked off by a group of men, some in masks and cam-

Protests by Karakalpaks erupt in Uzbekistan



The authoritarian government of Uzbekistan in Central Asia — an "ally and important partner" of Moscow — was forced to back off efforts to strip autonomous status from Karakalpakstan after mass protests broke out there July 1-2. The region has held this status since V.I. Lenin fought to establish the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a voluntary federation of republics after the Bolshevik Revolution. The Karakalpaks are a minority Turkic people with a separate language.

After the Uzbek regime of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev announced a new draft constitution that would eliminate the autonomous status of Karakalpakstan, and deny it the right to call for a referendum on whether to secede, thousands of people massed on the streets of Nukus, its capital and one of Uzbekistan's largest cities.

Barricades went up and some protesters tried to storm government buildings. Police imposed a harsh crackdown, killing at least 18 and wounding hundreds. Authorities declared a monthlong state of emergency. The guarantee of autonomy to Karakalpakstan had been carried over after Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet Union.

This was the second upheaval in the region this year. Mass anti-government protests broke out in neighboring Kazakhstan in January. Moscow led a brief military intervention to prop up the Kazakh government with forces drawn from nearby former Soviet republics.

— ROY LANDERSEN

ouflage, as he was leaving practice in St. Petersburg on July 1. His apparent "crime"? He had signed to play for the Philadelphia Flyers in the U.S. as opposed to continuing to play in Russia.

He is to be charged with evading military service, which men under 27 are required to complete, and was taken to a naval base.

"We live in an increasingly authoritarian state," said Oleg Mamadov, a 20-year-old member of the Libertarian Party, detained and fined for pasting up anti-war stickers in city streets. After a police raid on his home July 1 missed netting him, he is being hunted for spreading "fake news" about the Russian army.

Still opposition percolates. After an elite Russian fighting unit, the 331st Guards Parachute regiment based in Kostroma, northeast of Moscow, suffered initial heavy losses around Kyiv as Putin's invasion suffered early defeats, online memorials to some 62

soldiers killed were publicly posted.

One unidentified Kostroma resident, expressing a widespread reaction by townspeople to the losses, said, "I feel sorry for each of these boys, but I don't consider them to be heroes, I consider them to be victims" of Moscow's disastrous war.

Socialist Workers Party statement

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Patrice Lumumba and the independence fight in the Congo

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Sixty-one years after African anti-imperialist independence fighter Patrice Lumumba was assassinated, a gold-crowned tooth, the only part of his body that exists, was buried in a state funeral in the Democratic Republic of the Congo June 30. The date marked the 62nd anniversary of the central African country winning independence from Belgian colonial rule.

Lumumba set an example as a determined fighter against imperialist exploitation and oppression. Thousands gathered along the streets in Kinshasa to pay their respects to the leader who led the fight for the country's independence and was its first prime minister.

Belgium-backed secessionist forces executed Lumumba on Jan. 17, 1961, with the full backing of Washington. Belgian authorities promptly dissolved and dismantled his body in sulphuric acid, fearing his grave would become a rallying site for those in the Congo and elsewhere fighting against exploitation, oppression and the legacy of colonial rule. The Belgian policeman who oversaw the body's disposal took the tooth, which he kept in his home for decades.

In a mockery of what Lumumba fought for, attending the funeral was the foreign minister of Belgium, alongside the current presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighboring Congo Republic and several African ambassadors. Earlier that month Belgium's King Philippe visited the Democratic Republic of Congo for the first time and admitted Belgium's colonial rule was unjustifiable and racist, but refused to apologize for it.

Who was Lumumba? Why did he evoke the ire of Washington and other imperialist powers? What can working-class fighters learn from him today?

Independence fight in Congo

At the 1885 Berlin conference, where European powers carved up most of Africa among themselves, Belgian King Leopold II was allotted sole authority over the Congo. According to a Belgian government commission estimate, between the late 1870s and 1919 some 10 million people in the Congo died as a result of Belgium's colonial brutality.

In October 1958, Lumumba, a former



Independence leader and former prime minister of Congo, Patrice Lumumba, right, with aides after their arrest in late 1960. He was executed Jan. 17, 1961, by U.S.-backed Congolese forces.

postal employee, helped to found the Congolese National Movement, the first nationwide Congolese political party. At the time, Congo was among the world's largest producers of copper, uranium, cobalt, industrial diamonds and rubber. Belgium, France, England and U.S. companies were determined to maintain the oppressive living and working conditions of toilers there to reap superprofits off their backs.

As support for independence grew, Belgian authorities felt increasing pressure to appear to agree to independence, setting a date of June 30, 1960. All the while they intended to find a way to keep control over the peoples and resources of the country.

At the ceremony celebrating the event, Lumumba, who was not scheduled to speak, took the podium. His talk, broadcast on radio, electrified the population.

"No Congolese worthy of the name can ever forget that we fought to win" independence, Lumumba said, "a fight in which there was not one effort, not one privation, not one suffering, not one drop of blood that we ever spared ourselves. We are proud of this struggle amid tears, fire, and blood, down to our very heart of hearts, because it was a noble and just struggle, an indispensable struggle if we were to put an end to the humiliating slavery that had been forced upon us.

"The wounds that are the evidence of the fate we endured for 80 years under a colonialist regime are still too fresh and painful for us to be able to erase them from our memory," he said. "Back-breaking work has been extracted from us, in return for wages that did not allow us to satisfy our hunger, or to decently clothe or house ourselves, or to raise our children."

Malcolm X on Lumumba's example

Malcolm X, speaking at the first public rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity on June 28, 1964, hailed Lumumba's example. "He didn't fear anybody," Malcolm said. "They couldn't buy him, they couldn't frighten him, they couldn't reach him. Why, he told the king of Belgium, 'Man, you may let us free, you may have given us our independence, but we can never forget these scars.'"

Led by Washington and Brussels, the imperialist powers stepped up efforts to get rid of Lumumba. The CIA was plotting his assassination as "an urgent and prime objective," wrote then CIA Di-

rector Allen Dulles, in documents made public in a 1975 U.S. Senate report.

Less than two weeks after Congo's independence, Brussels organized a secessionist movement in the country's province of Katanga, where U.S. and European companies had vast mineral holdings. On July 11, 1960, Moise Tshombe, a wealthy businessman, declared Katanga's separation from the Congo. The Belgium government then sent 10,000 troops to Katanga to protect the secessionists.

Lumumba then made a fatal error. He requested United Nations "peacekeeping" troops be sent to the Congo. A force of 8,000 was rapidly dispatched there by the end of July. U.N. troops stood aside as pro-U.S. forces ousted Lumumba from the government in a coup led by Army Chief of Staff Col. Joseph Mobutu in September 1960. U.N. occupying forces then closed down government and disarmed forces loyal to him.

Lumumba was arrested and turned over to Tshombe's forces who executed him.

Teachers strike, protests hit soaring prices in Ghana



BBC/Favour Nunoo

Four teachers' unions in Ghana, West Africa, went on strike July 4 after the government refused to pay teachers and nonteaching staff a cost-of-living allowance of at least 20% of their wages. Annual inflation in the country is now 27.6%. Unions involved are the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the National Association of Graduate Teachers, the Teachers and Educational Workers Union and Coalition of Concerned Teachers.

The strike comes on the heels of street protests June 28-29 in the capital, Accra, above, against the high cost of living. Hundreds joined the actions.

"We can't afford rent and we're sleeping outside. The youths are jobless," taxi driver, Yaw Barimah, told the press. Barimah is a member of Arise Ghana, which organized the protests. Among demonstrators' demands is a call to abolish a new 1.5% tax imposed on electronic transactions. Police fired tear gas and used water cannons on demonstrators, arresting 29. Ghana's national currency, the cedi, has lost 22% against the dollar this year, lowering the value of workers' wages.

— JANET POST

‘Woman’s equality is part of working-class struggle for power’

The special feature this week is excerpts from an interview Clara Zetkin did with V.I. Lenin in 1920, part of preparations for her drafting a resolution for communist work among women for the Third Congress of the Communist International a year later. Lenin, the central leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, explained the fight for women’s equality as part of the unfolding socialist revolution in Russia. “The woman question,” he said, is “part of the social, working-class question,” and the task of communists is “to bind it firmly with the proletarian class struggle and the revolution.” The goal, he added, must be a mass movement of women “of all the exploited and oppressed.” The interview by Zetkin, a leader of the German Communist Party, is in *The Emancipation of Women*, available from Pathfinder.

— SPECIAL FEATURE —

BY V.I. LENIN

The first proletarian dictatorship is truly paving the way for the complete social equality of women. It eradicates more prejudice than volumes of feminist literature. However, in spite of all this, we do not yet have an international Communist women’s movement and we must have one without fail. ...

[T]rue emancipation of women is not possible except through communism. You must lay stress on the unbreakable connection between woman’s human and social position and the private ownership of the means of production. This will draw a strong, ineradicable line against the bourgeois movement for the “emancipation of women.” This will also give us a basis for examining the woman question as part of the



Painting by Boris Lebedev, 1969

V.I. Lenin, leader of Bolshevik Revolution, with Clara Zetkin, center, and his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya. Lenin and Zetkin worked together on resolution for Communist International.

social, working-class question, and to bind it firmly with the proletarian class struggle and the revolution. The communist women’s movement itself must be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movements; and not only of the proletarians, but of all the exploited and oppressed, of all victims of capitalism or of the dominant class. Therein, too, lies the significance of the women’s movement for the class struggle of the proletariat and its historic mission, the creation of a communist society. We can be legitimately proud that we have the flower of revolutionary womanhood in our Party, in the Comintern. But this is not decisive, we have to win over the millions of working women in town and country for our struggle and, particularly, for the communist reconstruction of society. There can be no real mass movement without the women.

We derive our organizational ideas from our ideological conceptions. We want no separate organizations of communist women! She who is a Communist belongs as a member to the Party, just as he who is a Communist. They have the same rights and duties. There can be no difference of opinion on that score. However, we must not shut our eyes to the facts. The Party must have organs, working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever else they may be called — with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact

with the Party and keeping them under its influence. This naturally requires that we carry on systematic work among the women ... not only proletarian women, whether they work in mills or cook the family meal. I also have in mind the peasant women and the women of the various sections of the lower middle class. They, too, are victims of capitalism, and more than ever since the war. ...

We cannot exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat without having millions of women on our side. Nor can we engage in communist construction without them. We must find a way to reach them. ...

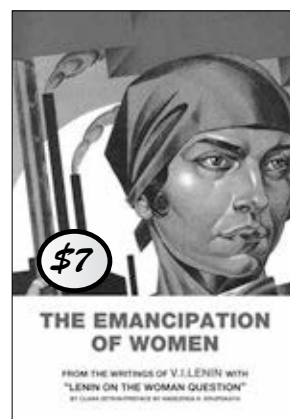
We must combine our appeal politically in the minds of the female masses with the sufferings, the needs and the wishes of the working women. They should all know what the proletarian dictatorship will mean to them — complete equality of rights with men, both legal and in practice, in the family, the state and in society, and that it also spells the annihilation of the power of the bourgeoisie. ...

The government of the proletarian dictatorship — jointly with the Communist Party and the trade unions of course — makes every effort to overcome the backward views of

men and women and thus uproot the old, non-communist psychology. It goes without saying that men and women are absolutely equal before the law. A sincere desire to give effect to this equality is evident in all spheres. We are enlisting women to work in the economy, the administration, legislation and government. All courses and educational institutions are open to them, so that they can improve their professional and social training. We are organizing community kitchens and public dining-rooms, laundries and repair shops, creches, kindergartens, children’s homes and educational institutions of every kind. In brief, we are quite in earnest about carrying out the requirements of our program to shift the functions of housekeeping and education from the individual household to society. Woman is thus being relieved from her old domestic slavery and all dependence on her husband. She is enabled to give her capabilities and inclinations full play in society. Children are offered better opportunities for their development than at home. We have the most progressive female labor legislation in the world, and it is enforced by authorized representatives of organized labor. We are establishing maternity homes, mother-and-child homes, mothers’ health centers, courses for infant and child care, exhibitions of mother and child care, and the like. We are making every effort to provide for needy and unemployed women.

We know perfectly well that all this is still too little, considering the needs of the working women, and that it is still far from sufficient for their real emancipation. Yet it is an immense stride forward from what there was in tsarist and capitalist Russia. Moreover, it is a lot as compared with the state of affairs where capitalism still holds undivided sway. ...

Think what this means in a country where the peasants comprise a solid 80% of the population. Small peasant farming implies individual housekeeping and the bondage of women. You will be far better off than we are in this respect, provided your proletarians at last grasp that the time is historically ripe for seizure of power, for revolution.



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The working class needs to carry out its own foreign policy

The following statement was released July 6 by Chris Hoeppner, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress from Pennsylvania.

The working class needs its own foreign policy — in sharp counterposition to that of the profit-driven imperialist U.S. rulers — for the same reason we need to act independently of the bosses as we fight for jobs, better wages and working conditions at home. It’s the road to advancing our self-confidence, class consciousness and political independence from the capitalists who exploit us. It starts from the interests workers share in common worldwide and the need for international working-class solidarity.

Locked-out Rolls-Royce workers in Montreal face attacks on pensions, wages and schedules that damage our families, similar to the assaults on workers here and around the world. Like other struggles by workers and farmers, the fight at Rolls-Royce deserves the support of our unions.

Farmers in the Netherlands are protesting reactionary “climate change” restrictions that will force many to cull herds and quit farming. The

simple fact is there is not enough food in the world today, not too much, especially with Moscow’s war and blockade of Ukraine’s grain harvest. In the U.S. and worldwide farmers confront ruinous price hikes on fuel and fertilizer. Our unions should back their struggles and call on governments to guarantee farmers’ costs of production. The Socialist Workers Party calls for nationalization of the land so it can be turned over to those who live and work on it and all debts can be abolished.

Crucial to a working-class foreign policy is unconditional support for the Ukrainian peoples’ fight for independence. Russian President Vladimir Putin claims Ukraine has no right to exist. His war of destruction exacts a deadly cost on the people of Ukraine, as well as the Russian workers he uses as cannon fodder. Workers worldwide should demand the immediate withdrawal of Moscow’s forces from all of Ukraine, including Luhansk, Donetsk and Crimea. Forging unity among working people both inside and beyond the U.S. borders cannot be achieved without an unbending struggle against all national oppression, including Putin’s attempts to

resurrect the czarist prison house of nations.

The SWP calls for an end to Washington’s sanctions against Russia, which, regardless of who they are aimed at, inevitably fall hardest on workers there. This undercuts advancing the unity among working people in Ukraine and Russia that’s needed to defeat Moscow’s war.

Everywhere Washington intervenes it does so to defend the interests of the U.S. capitalist rulers. As they have shown in countless wars, from Vietnam, to Korea, Iraq and elsewhere, they will not hesitate to use the most barbaric violence — including nuclear weapons as they did in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nor will the world’s final empire willingly relinquish its power. Power is never given away, it is taken.

The only force that can accomplish this mighty transformation is the U.S. working class. This is where working-class foreign and domestic interests come together — in the need to forge our own political party capable of ending the dog-eat-dog rule of capital and taking political power into our own hands. This will open the door to join with workers and farmers worldwide to chart a course forward together.

Ruling opens debate on rights of workers, women

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struggle transformed social relations in the U.S., changing how working people viewed themselves and inspiring millions around the world. It laid the foundations for the movement of hundreds of thousands that protested the rulers’ war in Vietnam, including growing numbers of U.S. soldiers.

These struggles affected the thinking of millions of workers across the country. Space to fight for social and political rights was expanded. This, coupled with growing numbers of women entering the workforce, led to a new wave of actions taken by women to begin challenging their second-class status.

In 1960 women were 38% of the U.S. workforce, with earnings averaging 60% of what men made. Efforts to get better-paying jobs met a brick wall. Many colleges barred women and fewer than 10% of the country’s doctors were female.

In 1969 some 210,000 women entered New York City hospitals due to complications from botched, illegal abortions. Thousands across the country died.

The fight to decriminalize abortion arose as part of broader developments. Opposition developed to the U.S. government’s forced-sterilization programs that especially targeted women who were Black and Chicano. Washington-led population-control policies resulted in millions of men and women being sterilized around the world. In 1976 the U.S. Department of Health reported that over 37% of women in Puerto Rico had been sterilized.

In 1965 affirmative-action laws prohibiting job discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion and national origin were won, and expanded in 1967 to bar discrimination by sex. The number of women in the workforce began climbing, and so did their paychecks. Women demanded and got better-paying jobs in auto plants, steel mills, mines and railroads. They worked with male co-workers and broke down anti-women prejudices, strengthening the unions in the process.

Under pressure, walls blocking women from many universities came down — at Dartmouth, Princeton and Yale, and finally Columbia University in 1983.

Modern contraception began to become available, but laws restricted its availability. Then, in 1972, the Supreme Court ruled that states could not ban its use.

Women’s rights fighters pressed for legal, safe abortions as part of these broader struggles. They were beginning to make some ground in the fight to win a majority to recognize that a woman’s right to decide whether to carry a pregnancy to term is necessary for advancing women’s equality.

Demonstrations for legal access to abortion, against forced sterilization, and in defense of the right to contraception broke out, with marches in cities from New York, Washington, D.C., to San Francisco. Counter-mobilizations against women’s rights also took place.

Just as the issue was becoming a national debate,

crucial to settling the issue, the Supreme Court majority stepped in and adopted the Roe ruling in January 1973, overturning laws in 46 states that restricted women’s access to abortion during the first three months of pregnancy.

The decision was hailed by millions at the time, including by the *Militant*. But it soon became clear that the ruling was a deadly blow to the just-begun fight to win support to repeal all laws restricting abortion.

Roe wasn’t based on the fundamental constitutional right to equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the 14th Amendment, but on privacy issues and medical criteria of “fetal viability,” something opponents of abortion rights have used over years to chip away at women’s rights and to claim that they are “pro-life.”

Following the 1973 ruling, the middle-class leadership of groups like the National Organization for Women derailed the budding movement. For them defending women’s rights meant pulling women off of the streets and into the Democratic Party, with no interest in the ties between abortion and the other issues facing workers and their families. They reduced the fight to defend women’s rights to pushing to elect Democrats to save the flawed Roe ruling.

Restrictions imposed since Roe

By the time the ruling was overturned, state governments had loaded on more than 1,300 restrictions to Roe v. Wade. In 2017 there wasn’t a single medical facility providing abortions in 89% of the counties of the United States. The end of Roe hasn’t led to a huge plunge in actual access to abortion. It highlights what has already been conceded since 1973 and what needs to be fought for in the years ahead.

Unlike laws permitting same-sex marriage and access to contraception — which continue to gain wider and wider acceptance — access to abortion doesn’t hold overwhelming support. Opinion on it remains deeply divided.

The Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade allows for reopening the much-needed debate to clarify how best to advance the interests of the working class and of women. There can be no road to women’s emancipation without addressing the broader social crisis bearing down on the working class, and defending the family, a refuge workers are more and more turning to.

Men and women are increasingly using our unions today to take up the fight for jobs, improved wages and working conditions, and an end to brutal work schedules — all things that are key for workers trying to start a family, or to hold one together. That includes the fight for affordable housing and child care; to federally funded medical care for all; for cost-of-living raises built into all union contracts and social programs; and access to adoption and family planning, including contraception and safe, secure abortions.

Alabama miners’ rally

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Warrior Met has been able to get production up to as much as two-thirds of what it was before the strike, using strikebreakers and mine bosses. It has not answered repeated requests by the *Militant* for comment.

“We are just asking for what we had before,” striking miner Ken Harrington told the *Militant* at the rally. “The company wants to keep the scabs and give them seniority. That’s not going to happen.”

“I don’t understand someone crossing the picket line,” striking miner Reginald Spencer told the paper. “I have a supportive wife. She is with me every step of the way in this. She went and got a second job. Sometimes I wonder about working for a company that treats people like this. But I’m going to stay the course, and I’m going to go back after the strike is settled.”

Coal bosses have given the United Mine Workers of America “a list of people they want to discharge and say we can’t represent them. That isn’t going to happen,” UMW International District 20 Vice President Larry Spencer told the gathering.

Warrior Met has repeatedly violence-baited union members since the strike began in April 2021 and told UMW officials it plans to fire 37 miners for alleged picket line violations. In October the company convinced a local court to grant an injunction against picketing within 300 yards of entrances to the company’s two mines, a coal preparation plant and other facilities.

The court has since relaxed the restrictions, but now limits the number of pickets to eight per authorized location. And strikers are barred from attempting to slow the entry of strikebreakers into the mine.

The miners are winning solidarity, including \$2.5 million donated to the strike fund from other unions and individuals. The UMW reports that it has spent \$21 million out of the union’s funds as well. Striking miners were each given checks for \$2,000 following the rally, on top of their weekly strike benefits.

UMWA auxiliary members and participants in an American Federation of Teachers contingent distributed hot dogs and chips to everyone.

Join the mineworkers’ next strike-support rally here in Brookwood, Wednesday, July 13!

Send checks made out to UMW 2021 Strike Fund to UMW Strike Fund, P.O. Box 513, Dumfries, VA 22026. Send messages of support to UMW District 20 at 21922 Hwy. 216, McCalla, AL 35111. Email: umwadistrict20@bellsouth.net.

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

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